

Build It Right: Incorporating Accessibility Into Student-Produced Artifacts

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Attention to accessibility generally focuses on course navigation and instructor- or publisher-produced materials, which implies assumptions about both the instructor and learners in the course. Even when online and blended courses are designed with accessibility in mind, they frequently include responses to peer-generated materials that are not accessible to some learners and perhaps not to the instructor. This presentation suggests solutions and elicits further discussion of how to meet the differing needs among both faculty and learners.

As higher education still revolves around the face-to-face lecture as the ideal (i.e. the sage on the stage), accessibility is often an afterthought, particularly in online courses. Even when the course design is accessible, student-produced artifacts are generally not reviewed for accessibility despite the increased frequency of peer -to -peer sharing and required responses, This presentation will demystify the process of creating accessible learning materials by both instructors and learners, ensuring that people of all abilities can access and utilize learning materials. This presentation will share ways to build accessibility into student-produced materials,therefore providing both a key career skill and ensuring access by all.

We begin with an introduction to Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles, followed by a description of Teach Access and its purpose: for instructors to teach accessibility to students as part of their coursework. Next we see the four stages of implementation over the course of one semester, from introducing UDL to learners through their demonstration of how to implement the principles and why they matter.

What follows are examples of how each stage was introduced to learners in the context of an introductory Latino/a/x Studies course taught by Dr. Sandra Watts of UNC Charlotte. Final learner products included an accessible infographic and transcript. Student-produced examples are available upon request from sandrawatts@charlotte.edu.

Universal Design for Learning Principles

The three core principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) are easy-to-implement strategies. Using these strategies each time you develop course materials is a proactive way to address accommodation needs of students, make your materials more accessible to all students and reduce the need to retroactively adapt your materials should you have a request from SDS (Student Disability Services) to do so.

The principles are:

1. **The What: Represent information in multiple ways.** Provide students with different ways to acquire information or knowledge. This may include multiple modalities to represent information or flexible formats that allow students to enlarge text or access captions.
2. **The How: Give students options to demonstrate they have met learning outcomes.** This may include allowing the use of different media and communication tools, designing assignments that provide choices for action or expression, and providing alternatives that accommodate the use of adaptive technologies, such as screen readers or adapted keyboards.
3. **The Why: Offer multiple approaches for student engagement.** This includes providing choices, making information relevant and relatable to a variety of learners.

"Harold & Wilma Good Library: Accessibility: Universal Design." *Universal Design - Accessibility - Harold & Wilma Good Library at Goshen College*, libraryguides.goshen.edu/accessibility/universaldesign. Accessed 30 July 2025.



Who We Are

Teach Access is a non-profit working to bridge the accessibility skills gap between education and industry.

[Learn more](#)

What is the accessibility skills gap?

The gap between the demand for digital accessibility skills in the workplace and the supply of workers who are knowledgeable and skilled in accessibility.

Although the demand is high for these skills, not enough students enter their post-graduation employment having learned about accessibility in their courses.

[Check out our Insight Report](#)

Four Stages, One Semester



*Image Credit: UDL Mindset in Practice from Ehrlich & Bartlett, AHEAD presentation,
2020*

Lesson 1: Creating an Accessible Self-Introduction

- A. Using Canvas Studio, record a 10 second video introduction with captions. Include your preferred name, major, and something you like to do in your spare time.
- B. [Review and revise captions.](#)
- C. Post your video to the Introduce Yourself forum. Download a transcript and include with your video.
- D. View and respond to the videos of two other people, using the process above.

There are several reasons why captions are important for videos:

1. Accessibility: Captions provide access to the video content for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. By providing captions, the video becomes accessible to a wider audience, including those with disabilities.
2. Comprehension: Captions can help viewers better understand the content of the video. This is particularly helpful when the audio quality is poor, or when the speaker has an accent or speaks a language that is not the viewer's first language.
3. Searchability: Captions make it easier to search for specific content within a video. Search engines can use the text in the captions to index the video, making it more discoverable.
4. Retention: Captions can improve viewer retention of the content. Studies have shown that viewers who watch videos with captions retain more information than those who watch without captions.
5. Multitasking: Captions allow viewers to watch the video while doing other tasks, such as working or studying, without needing to turn up the volume. This can be particularly useful in situations where noise is not appropriate, such as in a library or public transport.

"Accessibility." *Help*, help.illinoisstate.edu/accessibility/website-and-digital/accessible-content-overview/page-content/videos-and-multi-media/captioning-videos. A

ccessed 30 July 2025.

Lesson 2: Accessible Images with Alt-Text



"Racial Justice." <https://www.benjerry.com>, Ben & Jerry's, 8 Jan. 2023, www.benjerry.com/values/issues-we-care-about/racial-justice.

American University Accessibility for the Web

Techniques: Images

General Rules for Alternative Text +

Images as Links +

Images Containing Text +

Images as Icons and Buttons +

Image Alt Decision Tree

Let's Play Alt-TextThis!



Dacanay, Molly. "Barbie: Inspirational Role Model or Toxic Influence?" *Medium*, Past/Present/Pop, 4 Dec. 2023, medium.com/past-present-pop/barbie-inspirational-role-model-or-toxic-influence-36cd220b4b25.

Lesson 3: Three Things in Common Icebreaker

1. Create an accessible post including the following:

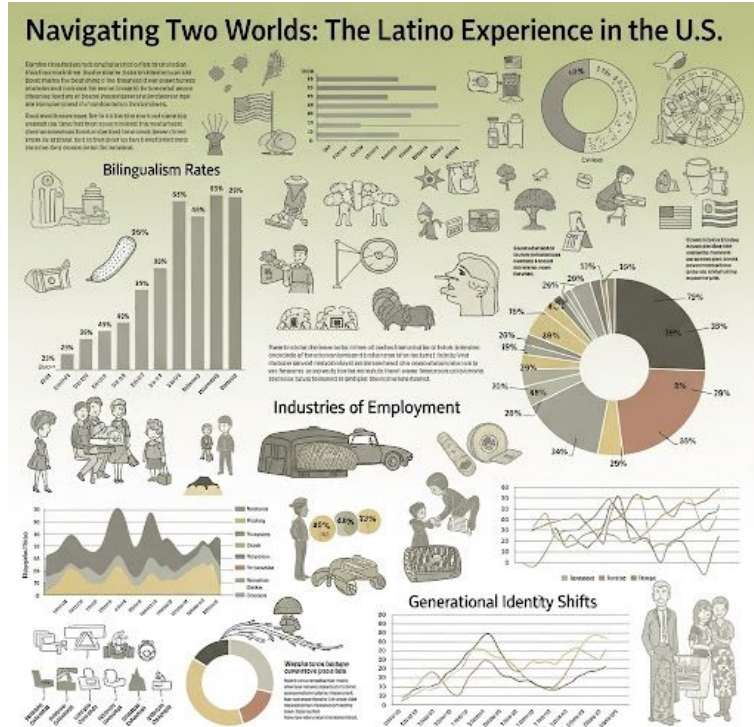
An image of something you enjoy (click and add Alt-text)

4 - 5 sentences explaining what the image means to you ([follow these techniques for basic content](#))

2. Check for accessibility using the Immersive Reader function to both read and listen to your post. Make any necessary changes.
3. Post your response.
4. Find three people with whom you have something in common and reply to their posts using the steps above.

Which do you prefer?

Accessibility in Infographics Benefits Everyone



Lesson 3: Putting It All Together

BUTLER
UNIVERSITY

Butler University / Research Guides (LibGuides) / OET / How to Make Digital Assets Accessible / Infographics

How to Make Digital Assets Accessible: Infographics

A resource to help you create accessible digital assets for your course

Home

Universal Design

Documents

Images

Video

Audio Files

Spreadsheets

Presentations

PDFs

Infographics

Canvas

If the information conveyed in an infographic is crucial, then it must be made accessible to all viewers. Infographics are a challenge not only for individuals with visually impairments, but also for individuals with cognitive disabilities that make it difficult to follow complex designs or find design elements distracting. Contact CAT at 940-8575 or email us at cat@butler.edu if you need assistance with creating accessible infographics.

Accessibility Guidelines for Infographics

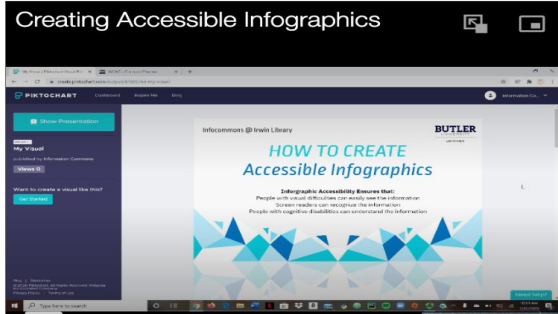
This is an overview of the elements that require special consideration when creating infographics. Please review one of the *Additional Resources* for detailed instructions on any of the following:

- Design the infographic using best accessibility practices for color contrast and use of color.
- Provide an alternative format for the infographic such as:
 - Long alternative text or transcript that conveys the content;
 - HTML/CSS so that a screen reader can access the content;
 - Narrated video or audio covering the same key ideas.

Examples

[WebAIM: Example of an accessible infographic](#)

Creating Accessible Infographics



How to Make Digital Assets Accessible - Research Guides (LibGuides) at Butler University, libguides.butler.edu/accessibility/infographics. Accessed 31 July

Works Cited

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Dacanay, Molly. "Barbie: Inspirational Role Model or Toxic Influence?" *Medium*, Past/Present/Pop, 4 Dec. 2023, medium.com/past-present-pop/barbie-inspirational-role-model-or-toxic-influence-36cd220b4b25.

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